HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Keedy, Gertrude

Interviewed By

Patricia Young

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INTERVIEWEE: GERTRUDE KEEDY

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

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TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

Y: This is an interview with Gertrude Keedy for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project at her home on Mountain View in Palm Desert. Today is January 29, Tuesday, 1980, and it's eleven o'clock in the morning.

Okay, I think we can start, Mrs. Keedy, by talking about how you and your family came to the desert.

K: We came to the desert in November of 1945 because a friend of my husband's had bought the property from King Gillette for a real estate development. And, at that time, he wanted to open a small grocery store, not to sell groceries, but to sell property, because you had to go to Indio or Palm Springs for a loaf of bread or a quart of milk. So we came down and looked at the project and decided to stay.

Y: When was this?

K: In November of 1945.

Y: And what was there at the time?

K: Well, there were about twelve homes on the Palm Village side, and nothing on the Palm Desert side at that time. Of course, it wasn't called Palm Desert. The property on the south side wasre Patton had his motor pool for his African Corps, but they had all gone by the time we arrived in the desert. And the twelve people or twelve homes, there were a couple of Navy nurses that lived there and a few other people, and one man that had a big acreage of flowers, florist kind of flowers that he sold, and then later on he had a cotton field there. [And we had a big huge swimming pool that we, was always full of fresh water because they used it to water all the grapefruit trees. So most of the people who lived here with their children spent our time with the, at the swimming pool.]

Y: Where were, you were talking about these flowers, where were they?

A: They were down, well, I'd say the south side of Highway 44, near the college.

Y: Acres of them, or . . .

A: Well, I'd say blocks more than acres of flowers. And, of course, we were all so busy raising children at that time, we didn't pay too much what was going on other than our own activities. [And my husband was running this little grocery store; it was just a small place. And because of this Bud Godfrey having a grocery store, he supplied us with all the hard-to-get items after World War II, butter and bacon and all that sort of thing. And when he would open in the morning, he might have a hundred people coming from Indio and Palm Desert and Palm Springs to buy the hard-to-get items.] And because they could be supplied out of this big market that this Bud Godfrey had in Huntington Park. And so he sold a lot of groceries and made it pretty successful at that time. [And about that time was when the Henderson brothers came down there to maybe get a coke or something at the grocery store and plan the other development of Palm Desert.] And most of the Frontage Road, or the highway, was all cotton field all the way down except for the place that was the Shadow Mountain Club, or has been the, well, it was a little small restaurant across from Hal Kapp's realty office.

Y: Angelos?

K: It was Angelo's. Before that it was two men from Palm Springs, Rocky Hume and another man from Palm Springs, that had a little restaurant there. And a lot of people came from Palm Springs to eat there, and kids all had their birthday parties there. It was different than what it is now. And that was about all. And then they opened the Sage and Sun Motel there, and that was about the first thing that went in. And . . .

Y: Where was that?

K: The Sage and Sun is where the gas station is now, across from Jerry Malone's Union Station. The Union Station was built about the same time. Then Oscar Hurley built the motel across the street from that. But we watched them digging the hole for putting in the light ?lake that Shadow Mountain Club and putting in the big swimming pool at Shadow Mountain Club. But along about that time they needed a post office for, but we couldn't get it because we didn't have the circulation. So somebody, I don't know quite how it all got put together, but Rendell Henderson decided to move his Desert Magazine to Palm Desert and with a twenty-five thousand circulation so we could get a post office. So we had a little tiny post office that was where the Mobile gas station is today,

and which later went into a little bigger place. And . . .

Y: What was that like? Where did you go before you had the post office?

A: We had to go to Indio. Most everybody shopped in Indio because it was a little closer than going to Palm Springs. There was hardly anything at Rancho Mirage at that time. But we had just beyond where the little post office was, there were six little huts. We had a grapefruit, a fresh fruit, stand and an Indian gift shop and a few little things there. And then they built, this was long before the drugstore was built, there were four little cottages there where Tony King had her first hairdressing place. And it was very small and everybody knew everybody and the girls organized a bridge club and we played bridge for about ten years, losing some and winning some. And then along about that time, the Vernon Peck's built the Palm Desert Adobe. Vernon and Lorraine, and they built it practically all by hand. And about that time they moved the little tiny grocery store down to where used to be, well, next door to Houston Lumber. And built the big grocery store there, and then we, Burt Tupper built the lumber store next to it. And about that time, my son was born in April of 1947. And so it makes him

the first child born in Palm Desert. But when they decided on the name for, we were Palm Village all that ~~time~~, and when they decided on the name, they decided to use the Palm of Palm Village and the Desert of Desert Magazine, and that's how it got its name, Palm Desert.

Y: Fascinating! You said that you were involved with the library and its beginnings.

K: Oh, yes. They called a meeting of ~~Gertrea~~ Cyria Henderson and Randall Henderson and Dr. Rookey, and self and Mary Ellsworth. Her husband, they lived here in the very beginning and he was the head of the real estate development. And they decided they were going to try to start a library and where we all, what we thought about it and that sort of thing. And then Randall went on to, Randall Henderson went on to to deal with the people at Riverside County and how we should set it up. So we rented a little store that was by where ~~Air, Land and Sea~~ AirLansea has just moved out, a little store there, or a little building. And Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, Chambers, not Chamberlain, Chambers, donated all the shelving and stuff for our little library. And everybody went to work and we got Riverside County to

get us the books and we were there, a small library, oh, six or seven years, I believe. And at that time we decided, Randall and ~~Cerrea~~ Cyria Henderson said they would donate their piece of land over by the school if we could build a library. So we formed a corporation and there was a man from Bank of America, I believe his name was Mr. Fletcher, but I'm not real sure, he was the head of this corporation and we all gave our own ideas and how we were going to finance it and we had an open, threw it open at the school one time for everybody to come, the taxpayers, because we thought the best way would be for taxing the community. Well, it was a disaster. because everybody had a different idea and nobody wanted to spend anymore money on taxes, so then we let it sit for quite a few years. And then we decided, about that time, the man from Bank of America had gone and Hal Kapp was, took over the job.

Y: Library association.

K: Yes, library association, and we all, of course, worked. We had a representative from all the community clubs. Now I was president of the little library when we left there, so I went on to become a member of the corporation because I represented the library itself. And then the

woman's club sent somebody, the Rotary Club sent somebody, that's how we got our group together formed to this. Then we worked at it. Then we decided that they would borrow the money from the bank and build the library. And John ~~Alcott~~ Outcault gave us his time on the thing. Of course, everybody gave their time on everything. Marge Brown was fabulous at what she was doing. And she was one of the lenders or loaners of the money to build the library. And Randall and ~~Cerrea~~ Cyria were glad to help us and get the library started. And so then we stayed on the board for, after the library was built we were all on the board and made the decisions. At that time we owned the building, but we rented ~~the~~ it to Riverside County for a library, and knowing that sometime along the line we would have to give, when the Palm Desert incorporated, we would give the library to the City of Palm Desert. And Riverside County still, I believe, still have to pay rent to Palm Desert, the City of Palm Desert.

Y: You must remember then about the schools and how they were formed here.

K: Well, we built, when my children, Barbara, I believe, was in the first kindergarten class, and a fellow by the name of Stan Ring was an architect and he designed the school.

How we got the ground, I'm not real sure whether Cliff Henderson gave it to us because he was so active with everything, and so was Randall. And, but they built the little grammar school there and it was called Palm Desert Grammar School at the time. And both my children went through school there, and it was some, I couldn't tell you how many people were in the school. But they formed a PTA, the whole group of us, and I think there was a charter somewhere with all our names on it for starting the PTA. And then, of course, along came the Brownie group and the Girl Scouts and the Cub Scouts and everybody in the whole community pitched in to take care of all the children and do all the things. In the early years Cliff Henderson used to get us the tallest pine tree that ever grew or fir tree and put it in the back of the, the backllots of the Frontage Road where the stores are now. And put up and trim the tree. And we'd have little bags of candy and stuff for all the children. And he would bring in flatbeds and we would, with hay, and we would sing Christmas carols around the Christmas tree. And then we'd all get on the flatbeds and sing Christmas carols around town. It was great. It was almost, right this minute, almost unbelievable because

we were all together. I think everybody did everything for everyone else. And we were always ready if anybody needed help and we had a big flash flood, oh, about twenty-four years ago now. And almost everybody got flooded out, including our whole house. We didn't have, water came in and we didn't have, every room in the house, the closets and under the bed were full of water. So everybody pitched in and came over to help to get the water through. We opened the back door and, pushed [illegible]. Closed the highway in front of the Jerry Malone's gas station. And that was, Jerry came and Kay came down and bought the Union station there after it had been built for two or three years.

Y: So that was back in the forties, if he bought that station.

K: No, it had to be, well, no, it had to be almost the early fifties or late forties.

Y: The years you're talking about, the Christmas activites that went on, was that in the fifties? Did school open in the fifties?

K: Well, Barbara was ten months old when we came here, so she had to be about four and a half, so what would that make it, about forty-nine, wouldn't it?

Y: Yes.

K: Yes, about forty-nine.

Y: Okay.

K: Carmen Cook was one of the teachers and one of the ones that helped so well at that school. Everybody loved her.

Y: You were also talking earlier about Edith Eddy Ward.

K: Well, Edith came about, not too long after we came here, maybe a few months. And she came from a little town called Cambria up on the coast and came down here to sell, to go into the real estate business. And she built a little, started to build her house over or had it built, part of a house, maybe small house. I can't quite remember. And which later used as a part of the Sun and Shadow Motel. And then Herb Pritzlaw built a lovely home up on Joshua Street, all of wood kind of house, lovely place. And he came home one night from Shadow Mountain Club and went to sleep with a cigarette or something, on his hand and burned his house down. Didn't burn him up, but it burned the house down. So we all went to the fire because about this time my husband was the head of the fire department. It was all volunteer fire and they had big . . . Cliff was so great about doing things at Shadow Mountain Club because he knew all the celebrities in the world. And he got the group that were in Hell's a Poppin',

the big Hell's a Popping stage, whatever they were, and they came here and performed at the Shadow Mountain Club so we could have the money to help finance the fire department.

Y: That's great. That's great. Do you remember when Shadow Mountain Club was dedicated?or whatever, when he opened up for development on this side? There was some kind of a celebration or something, wasn't there?

K: Well, they might have had an opening party. Of course, we all lived at Shadow Mountain Club. Even if it wasn't around the pool, it was in the dining room or something. I mean, where everybody met every night and, or every day, and there probably was some sort of a party because Cliff, around that time, had, in the summertime, he had this big screen out on the lawn. And we all had movies, not every night, couple of nights a week, and we all, everybody and their kids, came to sit out on the lawn and watch movies every night. And Edgar Bergen used to come down with Charlie and do stage things for us. And we had a lot of celebrities coming there, lot of people coming for pool activities, diving and Sammy somebody came there to dive. And we always had some good thing and one summer Cliff had my husband, because he was in

the restaurant business, on Saturday nights, he would go over there and cook and everybody would come and pay so much for dinner. And everybody would volunteer, somebody would help make the salad, somebody would do something else, and we, so there was something going on all the time all summer long.for activities, which was a lot of fun because you could bring all your kids. And we all had trouble with getting babysitters in those days because there weren't enough people around.

Y: You're saying then the people did stay all summer.

K: Oh, yes. Most everybody had swamp coolers in those days. They didn't have air conditioning like they have today. But, of course, we were all young. We didn't care if it was hot or cold.

Y: Do you remember the dedication of the library? Was there portable . . .

K: Well, we had a lot of donors that gave us money to finance the beginning and some of the building and stuff of the library. And as I was working at El Dorado Country Club at the time and President Eisenhower was supposed to be, or I guess he was, fifty-two, I can't remember whether he was still president or whether he was just General Eisenhower, but he was supposed to come to give us the

speech for the thing. And, as I remember, he was ill and didn't get a chance to come over to it. But a lot of people that were visitors or belonged to El Dorado Country Club gave money to help finance the library. And if they go over there and read the plaque that they have there in the library they can see their names and how much they donated, I believe.

Y: Interesting. You also said you remembered when Rio Del Sol was . . .

K: Oh, yes. Don Cameron was a real estate man in that Rancho Mirage and Isabell, his wife. And they, Don was very active on getting this road through. And it was, they decided on Tiera Del Sol and we all, all of us, everybody and their children, went to the cutting of the ribbon. And it was, oh, I imagine, about where Eisenhower Hospital is now. I think it was about the place that we had this thing. We used to all go out in the sand dunes and on flatbeds and take all the children and go have big barbecues on the big sand dunes. And it was almost like a fairy tale now because of all the activities we did as what everybody would like to be doing now, the freedom of coming and going. And my son played tennis and we had a nice, good tennis group, adults usually

played at night and the kids. And I was sort of proud of my son because he had three lessons from Magda and he got into a tournament and we won. And there were about thirty kids playing it. He won the tournament. He got the good sportsman award at the dinner afterwards.

Y: Great! You were mentioning about having barbecues. You told me something about the Desert Inn. Used to have an area out there.

K: Oh, the Desert Inn, when they, before they tore it all down, they used the place that's just beyond Silver Spur Mobile place, up in that area was where they had their roundup and their barbecues and things, bringing all their guests from Palm Springs out there. And, of course, we were never really invited to any of them, but it's where all the barbecue thing was.

Y: Now, is that off of 74, up near Ironwood?

K: It's off of 74.

Y: Oh!

K: Just before you start up the mountain.

Y: You must remember the beginning of the reserve, too, very well, desert reserve.

K: Well, of course, the desert reserve was there. That's where we took our little Brownies and our Girl Scouts on

our trip, all up into that Ironwood Canyon and through there. And Lou Keener (uhner) was an early person here then. And we would have night barbecues up there, which is now the desert reserve. And I can remember when the first time we ever came here, we, there was a big gambling place on Cathedral City, huge big place. And we all went there with all the tables and stuff. And later on they burned down, but that was in that early, very early, even before we even moved down here, we went to that.

Y: Anything else you can think about. I've covered my notes pretty much.

K: Well, of course, there were a lot of activities we didn't go into because Cliff had built this horse place in back of Shadow Mountain Club, a paddock or corral or whatever. And a lot of people who were interested in horses were active in that kind of thing.that didn't, I was not associated with. Then they moved it down to the other side of the highway towards Rancho Mirage. They built it down there, stables.

Y: Where Painter's Pass is now, that area?

K: Whatever it's, where the bridge, just beyond where the bridge is.

Y: Was there a lot of agriculture out this way when you first came?

K: No, not necessarily. There probably was around between here and Indio, but not so much in our immediate area. At the time, when we were all there, everyone thought that the growth was going to go towards Palm Springs until they got together and did the Indian Wells Country Club. And it brought people down to this end where we had never ever thought about places going in. And Milt and Betty Page were very active. They had the Palm Springs Rancho, which is now El Dorado Country Club, and they were very active with the Cub Scouts and that sort of thing. They had the grapefruit trees and grapes and that sort of thing on their property at that time, which was all taken out when they built. And Jimmy Hines and John Dawson were the ones that were, that got the property in, got it held together, to become El Dorado Country Club.

Y: So you knew the Pages fairly well then.

K: Oh, yes.

Y: Oh, what did people say to you?

K: Well, lots of people have said, "You're not going to raise your children in an area like this, like around Palm Springs." But I think my children have had a fabulous beginning, and I just, because we were always there. We were never too

busy to take, to be with the children. When they opened the drive-in here in Cathedral City, we would make our sandwiches and our hamburgers and stuff and pile the kids in the station wagon and, but we never left them to a babysitter. I don't know, we just, they had a pretty good early life.

Y: When did your husband take over the restaurant? When did he go from grocery store to restaurant?

K: Well, he went to the grocery store until they sold the grocery store. The Godfreys, Godfrey and Chris Endra had decided that they had taken enough sales off of the area. So they sold the grocery store and I think the water department to, I can't remember the man's name, but later on Mr. Andrews took over the grocery store. And because he bought it because he, at that time, was a good friend of Anne Carpenter's husband, Harold Carpenter, and he bought it over. And, of course, he didn't need anybody to run it. And my husband went to work for Bill Cook in the date business for awhile. And then he went to work at Valley Date. And about that time, around that time, of course, Ed Mullen and a fellow, partner of his, Charlie, and I can't remember Charlie's last name, started the Palm Desert Pharmacy. And they had a counter in there

Charles Hughes on Theater curtain ad

where you could have cokes and sandwiches and that sort of thing. And Bob had always been interested in the restaurant business because his mother, he loved to watch his mother cook and all that sort of thing, and so he talked to Ed and they decided to build another part on to that drugstore and then he would sell him the stuff that was his because he was almost trading dollar for dollar because of the, and we really needed the space for, to enlarge the drugstore. So my husband bought the stuff, and this Stan Ring that designed our school designed the building, never dreaming it was going to turn out as big as it was. It was just a little sleepy place for awhile. And that's how he started and he's still at it, twenty-five years.

Y: But now he has a new place, or he has a different place, or is it the same one?

K: No, it's in the same place. Same counter that was in Ed's drugstore.

Y: That's great!

K: Then, of course, there was the same old thing. That's where everybody met all the time.

Y: I understand there was someone named Marianne, and there was Marianne's grocery store.

K: Yes, down, I think about where Secondhand Rose is now. It might be even the same building. She opened a waffle shop, and everybody went there to the waffle shop. Bob never got into the waffle thing until later, but a lot of people and a lot of movie celebrities would be, I think Tab Hunter practically and Rock Hudson used to come in down there an awful lot and I can remember a few people coming into Bob's places and eating and everybody, of course, loved to watch. I worked for awhile up at Shadow Mountain Club for the Stewards in the little dress shop they had there by the pool, and Merle Oberon came in one day with a fellow. And he had lived in Palm Springs and he was complaining and complaining about the weather, What ever happened to this wonderful weather and this and this and this. And, of course, it was the time of the year when the sun wasn't out or something. And he was complaining, and she was so gracious and so nice, and she turned around to me. She said, "Well, don't blame her, it isn't her fault." I could have hugged her for it. But we saw a lot of people, but I thought was just great. Jimmy Stewart and his wife were there a lot. And, oh, I could go down the line for a lot of people that we . . . I think they liked

the . . . of course, when Cliff Henderson and Leonard Firestone built the Fire Cliff, that was so much the, Edgar Bergens had a little cottage over there at the Sun Lodges. And so a lot of those people like the Firestones and the Darts and the Tuttles and all that group, their immediate group, would be down there all the time. And little . . .

Y: Down where?

K: Down at the Fire Cliff, and of course, they had dinners there at night. It was just a little small place. And Barbara went, they had an Easter egg hunt one time when Barbara was probably about three, maybe four. And she won a bunny and I have her picture taken with June Allyson presented the bunny to her. June Allyson is holding her with Walter Pidgeon looking on. It was just great. Got to know everybody and . . .

Y: Were you involved in the opening of El Dorado Country Club? Did you watch that whole thing?

K: Well, yes, because I worked at Thunderbird Country Club for five years. And Jimmy Hines and John Dawson were the ones that put that together, and they they did this, so they had opened El Dorado for about two years and just one little tiny small place that they used for the

starter and the little shop. And then they were going to build this big clubhouse. And Bob McCulla, there were five, I believe, people who owned or started this thing and then they sold out to Bob McCulla. McCulloch And he financed the building of the building, but we were all coming from Thunderbird to take over El Dorado. And the first night they asked me to, the Hineses and the Dawsons asked me if I would hostess the party, and tell everybody where they should sit and, because we had all those people from England. The Rider Club matches were at that time. And we had over five hundred people at that dinner. The workmen were going out the back door and the guests were coming in the front door. And we got them all seated, practically all seated. I had a girl helping me. And the only two people that hadn't gone in was Bob Hope and Sam Smead, and they were still sitting there talking. And I went up to them, and I we had a lot of Smead people living in our area, and I wasn't sure about this Sam Smead. I hadn't seen him before. And I knew quite a few golfers by then, and I walked over to him and I said, "Sam Smead?" Well, I never heard such a laughter in my life. Bob Hope almost went through the soft laughing.so hard. He said, "Smead!" And he

laughed again. I wished the whole thing would open up and I'd go down the . . . I was so embarrassed, but it was the first time I ever made the Hope laugh.

Y: Was he around the area a lot then?

K: Yes, quite a bit. And so was Bing Crosby and, at the time, little Mary Frances was born, they invited me to come up to see the baby. And I always, I just, for some reason, didn't go, and then I sort of watched her grow up to a little girl until they moved up to northern California. But they were always, Bing was just like, and so was Bob Hope, well, almost everybody was just like they knew them. And President Eisenhower, and I saw President Kennedy when he was at the El Dorado and I saw Johnson when he flew in, in the helicopters and landed on the golf course. And he was with the president of Mexico that time. They were all just, you know, no different than the rest of us.

Y: Do you think we still find that here in the desert? I mean, people

K: No. Of course, it was the same old thing. All the old-timers get together and they, oh, we used to have so much fun, and why don't we ever have fun. But I think we find that the, we could almost have the same thing, but I don't

think the new people would like our ways, you know. I mean, they probably had their own ways and the different places where they grew up and remember that like we remember this.because we been here, now this is, we're going on our thirty-fifth year. And I think everybody remembers their beginnings more than . . . I think everybody's too busy now. And too much traffic and too much, I don't know what it is. It just kind of lost its friendliness. We all said we were going to have a big party sometime and we're not going to invite anybody that wasn't here before 1955. I mean, we're only going to invite the ones who were here and have a big party, so we could all talk about how much fun we used to have. But then, of course, everybody had fun when they were younger.

Y: (laughter) It's just that they were kinder.

K: Different kind. Although they had the road was, from here to Palm Springs, was unreal at that time. It was just a two-lane road and they had a big rock thing just as you come out of Cathedral City this way that you had to almost get out of your car to go to see if somebody was coming the other way.

Y: What was it like between here and Indio?

K: Well, it was just a two-lane road for a long, long time. Of course, we didn't drive that fast to get there any faster than we do today. And, of course, we had to go in the early times if you wanted to really buy groceries you always wound up going to Safeway in Indio to buy groceries. A lot of people went to Palm Springs, but it was always further to Palm Springs than it is to Indio.

Y: Did people tend to just stay around here when they wanted to go out, you know, go to dinner or have some entertainment?

K: Oh, yes. I think that most everybody, in the early time, I think, almost everybody went to Shadow Mountain Club. They had some very, very good chefs and managers in those years at Shadow Mountain Club. And Lou ~~Keener~~ Kuehner, who started a group called, wasn't exactly the way he worded it, but we called it the "Not So Old Young Married" group. And we used to have all kinds of fun and have games on the dance floor and like musical chairs, all that kind of stuff. And just have a great time. Lou was so, he was so great with the children at that time. Boy, I'll tell you, he just got them all in line. They didn't dare do anything they weren't supposed to.

And then Betty Crockettwas the lifeguard for a long time. And if she'd, and she didn't allow any running on the sidewalk or list all the things that you couldn't do and if you got out of line or didn't do what you were supposed to do, you had to pick up all the towels at the end of the day. And guess who picked up the most towels? My son Doug. He was always into get them. But then the Stewards had a nice little shop at Shadow Mountain Club and Irene Mathius was the hostess, and just a swell gal. And we would have big groups coming in and serve around the pool or on the patio or, and fashion shows around the pool.almost every Sunday.from Stewards, and all volunteer. And, oh, we just, everybody in the world went to Shadow Mountain Club on Sundays to watch the fashion shows, the girls in the bathing suits, of course, and it was just great fun.

Y: I was going to ask you something. (laughter) Oh, I know what it was. Did your children go to Leisure Loft or were they older by the time they started that?

K: No, he started Leisure Loft, they had, they were into that group and then I can't remember where Lou had that Leisure Loft.

Y: At the Warner Ranch.

K: Yes, but that wasn't the first place. I think there was one before that. One place they were, maybe it was just at Shadow Mountain Club. I'm not sure. But the big ranch, I thought that was always the Williams Ranch down there which is now, that would be this new country club, big, big Spanish style with the big swimming pool.

Y: Was the one next to it, I think.

K: At that time we called it the Williams Ranch and that's all. He had that for quite awhile and I think a lot of the Leisure life was a lot of the parents, a lot of people. I know I think I went to everything they had.

Y: When they had that Leisure facility down there.

K: Yes. And then he had one up in Rancho Mirage at one time, too. I can't remember exactly the road that he, where you turned to go to the thing, off of Culver somewhere.

Y: Do you remember what the Page Ranch looked like before they . . .

K: Well, the Page Ranch was built almost by the creek like and was a big U-shaped building. And then they sold out to this group that was going to build the El Dorado Country Club. They moved the Page home over towwhere the stables and the polo group have been. Now I don't k

know what ever happened to the house. But Milt Page's father was associated with a big, I can't say gambling house, but I can't remember what, no, and he was associated with things in Las Vegas at that time. And . . .

Y: Because that certainly changed in Indian Wells between that and Indian Wells Hotel or Country Club.

K: Yes. Well, they built the Indian Wells Country Club first, or did they? Yes. Because I was still at Thunderbird when they were, Eddie Sussella was one of the active ones towards getting that together. And then they did the El Dorado one after that.

Y: Were you around when they first started Thunderbird?

K: No, they started Thunderbird I believe around 1952, and then I went to work at Thunderbird in 1955. And then we opened El Dorado in the end of October of 1959. And then they sold out to the members on January of 1960, I believe. The members bought out the people who owned the . . .

Y: That was quick. I didn't realize . . .

K; Fifty-seven they must have started because they were there two years. We opened with that ~~Write~~ Ryder Cup Match at end of October because we had matches and then we had

the national seniors right after that. So it was, then I stayed there until 1964 when they hired another pro to take over. And he wanted to have his own help. Then later on I went to Desert Air for seven years.

Y: Oh! Tell me about that. People don't even know about it. Yes.

K: They built, they had this piece of property which was the ~~Goofty~~ Gogerty property called Desert Air at a place where planes came in. And you could fly in and have your lunch or your dinner and fly out again, and it was the same thing. All of us loved to go to the Desert Air. And they, I think Jimmy Hines was the instigator of, and a Charles Mallory, no, some man from, O'Malley, from Chicago, got together and got these five people together to buy the whole piece of property and then they built, took away the landing field and built a golf course. And about that time they were, they had to have a nice club house and Jimmy Hines was behind all of that, too. And he and, oh, I think, I can't remember the man's name that built, that designed that golf course, but it was a great golf course. And I was, I went to work there when they opened the Desert Air. The first year they gave Jack Petry, who had the shop at Indian Wells, the

shop and I went to work for Jack Petry and then at the end of the first year they, Jimmy Hines offered the job or asked Bill Ogden if he would take it because he was, Bill Ogden was a prodigy of Jimmy Hines at North Shore Country Club in Chicago. So then I went to work for Bill Ogden doing the buying and managing the shop and playing a lot of golf when I could. And stayed until they sold out to the Las Palmas group.

Y: Now I understand that the old original rancho homes, the houses up there still somewhere. Do you know anything about that?

K: Well, the first condominiums they built at Desert Air. They built five houses. I mean, some of them were double, you know, there would be rental on one side and live in the other. And then they built a little more of things but they would know everything was taken down. The old dining room, when they first built Desert Air, they still had some of the little cottages there and they used it as the dining room. And Omar Bastasso and Gail were, took over the restaurant. And she had been, her mother had been, owning the Forest Inn. And so both Gail and Omar knew all the restaurant business. And they specialized in some fricassee of chicken or something

and they have a lot of people that came there to eat. And the food was very good. And then about that time they decided to take down all that or close it up. And the cottages were getting pretty old, so they were, not army barracks--well, about army barracks that they pulled in there from one of the . . .

Y: Patton's area?

K: No, not Patton; they didn't come from the Patton thing. Quonset huts, that's what I was trying to say. Quonset huts. And so they didn't last as long as a regular built house, so they took down a lot of those and closed them because they just used them for storage and that sort of thing.

Y: But didn't he have cottages there for a long time? Once you said they had no place to stay, there was no motel.

K: That's right. They didn't really take all the cottages away. They closed them because they were pretty bad by then, been there for a long time. But I don't think they pulled most of those cottages away until they started building Las Palmas. But I know when they built Monterey Country Club but the Hommes still have their ranch. They owned that property and sold it to Bill Bone for

Monterey Country Club. And they kept their own home right in the middle, almost in the middle of that, if that's what you mean about somebody keeping their house. But that's over in Monterey Country Club. We used to go through their property. A lot of times we went out on the sand dunes and had barbecues, and then the Malone Ranch was just beyond that which, I think, is Chaparral Country Club now.

Y: Their dad doesn't belong, their home isn't there anymore, Malone Ranch?

K: No, I don't think so. When they built Shadow Mountain Club, they built a small pitch and putt golf course around the building, around the pool area and all of us played golf there. Most of it was par three. We played golf there a lot around the thing, and which was fun before they decided to build a big, and I think the man that was responsible for building that was, he was from the state of Washington. I can't remember his name, that started the, got the whole thing together to build it. But actually the Shadow Mountain Golf Club had, really had nothing to do with Shadow Mountain Club. It was two separate things at the time and run by two different . . .

Y: Who owns most of the land over here on the north side, I mean on the south side?

K: Well, as I remember, the Henderson brothers, mostly Cliff, bought this, I believe it was something like four hundred and forty acres of land from the government. And they decided to subdivide it and sell it, the property.

Y: Do you remember that old, I think it's Ray Wilson's home over on 74 near the adobe?

K: That was Hazel, oh boy, that little old little house was there, and it was, I knew the people so well and I can't even remember the name, Hazel, the daughter, used to be my babysitter, and she works at Safeway today. And that was her parents, just a little tiny house there, right at the edge of 74. And then when they built this unit five was across the highway from 74 which was going to be, was onee of the less expensive homes being built and then all that piece of property went, the Holstein bought it for, to build the Sandpiper development. And for a long, long time we used to, the road between here and Rancho Mirage was, if you didn't turn off of El Paseo to get on Highway 111, you would go straight ahead and hug the mountains along there. And it was a very dangerous road in there, two-lane road, for a long time, a lot of

accidents and stuff in there. But then it came out above the, almost into Rancho Mirage before they ever built the Highway 74 coming through, straight on through there. I think the road was, at the time, we thought that they were going to level the road, the highway, going through Palm Desert so it would be even with all of those frontage roads. Then I think it got too costly and they couldn't do it because they'd have to move an awful lot of earth to bring that down to the level of the, and so they just built a new highway and that's the way it is today.

Y: So that's why we have El Paseo, you say?

K: No.

Y: You mean that's why we have 74.

K: No, that isn't why we have 74, but the main highway going through, Highway 111, going through was going to be lowered so that the Frontage Road and the highway would all be the same level. And then I think it was just too costly to move all that dirt, and so they left it like that way.

Y: I see. When were they thinking of doing that?

K: Well, I think they probably wanted to be on the level of, not high, I don't know, I don't know how much, I know, I think it would have been nice. We wouldn't have all

the problems with Frontage Road. But . . .

Y: Who knows?

K: Who knows.

Y: I'm curious. Were they thinking of doing that in the sixties?

K: When they built that, probably somewhere along there. There was a highway there, but it wasn't as finished or as wide as it is today.

Y: Yes.

K: Of course, it was where all, it's four lanes now, and it was only two lanes for a long, long time.

Y: So now it's just like luxury.

K: Yes, I should say so.

Y: Interesting. Anything else you can think of?

K: I was trying to think of what . . .